

STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

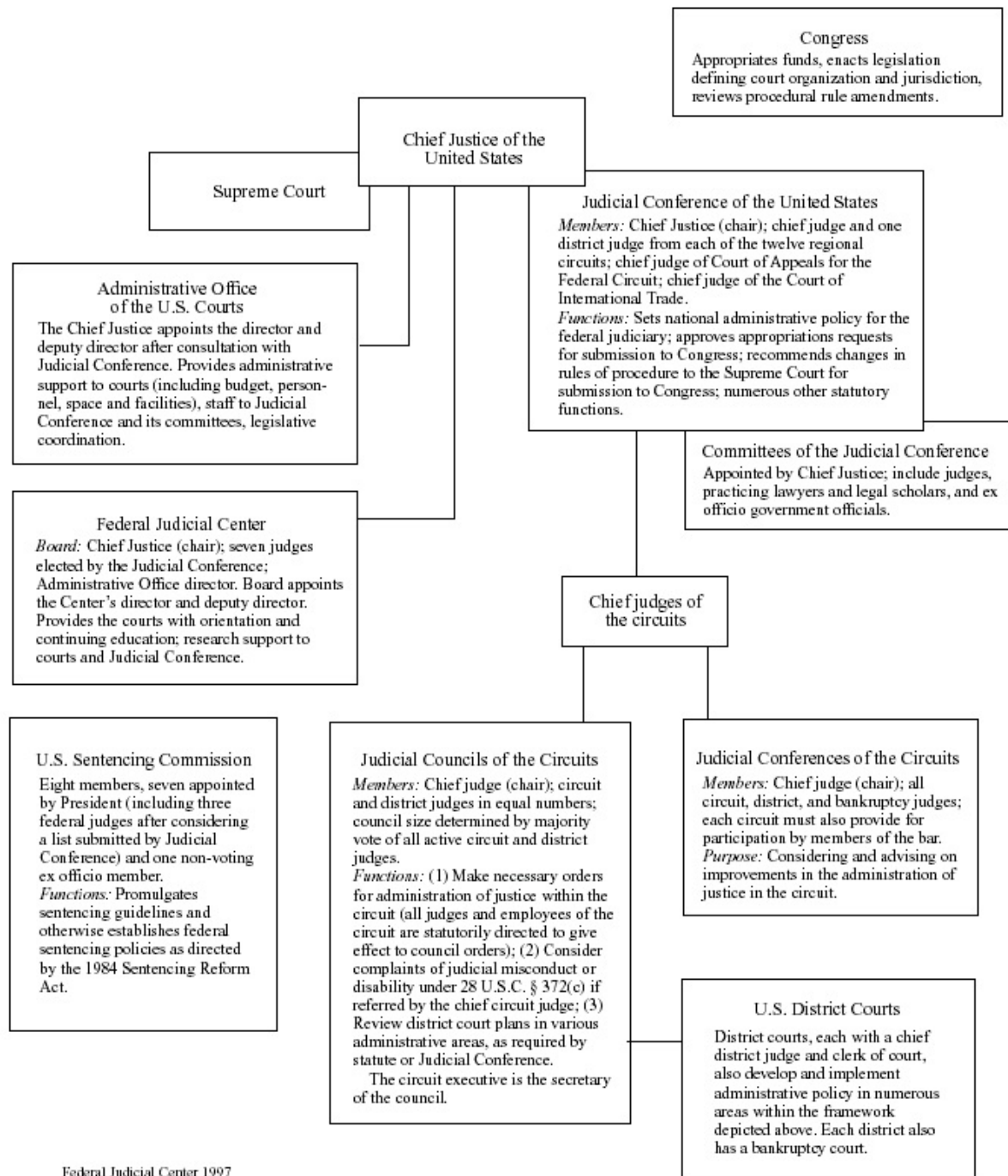
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The federal courts were established as an independent third branch of government by Article III of the Constitution, which provides for a Supreme Court and “such inferior courts” as Congress deems necessary. Congress established federal district and circuit courts with the Judiciary Act of 1789. A major reform of the system occurred in 1891 with the Circuit Court Act, which established a permanent appellate court for each circuit. Today, the 94 federal district courts are grouped into 12 circuits, each with its own court of appeals.

The administrative head of each circuit is the chief judge of the court of appeals, who achieves this position by seniority. The judicial councils of the circuits, which include active judges of both the courts of appeals and district courts, are charged with administrative responsibility for the circuit as a whole, headed by a chief judge. The chief judge of each circuit and an elected district judge represent the circuit at the semi-annual Judicial Conference of the United States. This body, chaired by the Chief Justice of the United States, is convened for the purpose of determining policy in administrative matters. In addition, the Conference directs the housekeeping arm of the federal judiciary, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, and advises the legislative and executive branches on matters affecting the judiciary. The Federal Judicial Center, which is governed by a national board of which the Chief Justice is chairman, is the research and training arm of the federal judiciary.

The United States Courts for the Second Circuit exercise federal jurisdiction within the states of Connecticut, New York, and Vermont. The Court of Appeals sits in New York City. The six districts (the state of New York is divided into the Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western Districts) each have a district court and a bankruptcy court, and sit in the locations shown on the map on page 5A. As of May 1, 2004, the Court of Appeals has 12 active judges in 13 judgeships, 11 senior judges (nominally retired judges, most of whom carry heavy caseloads) and one vacancy. The district courts have a total of 57 active judges, 39 senior judges, 45 magistrate judges and 28 bankruptcy judges. There are five district judgeship vacancies.

Federal Judicial Administration



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